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**The Value of Service in the Library and Information Science
Curriculum**

by

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**The Value of Service in the Library and
Information Science Curriculum**

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Dedication

A Jeffrey por su maravillosa amistad

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Abstract

The Value of Service in the Library and Information Science Curriculum

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This exploratory study examined the value of service, which has been implicitly present in the field for decades and is recognized as one of the pillars of the profession. However it seems that there is not a universal approach to it and it looks like it is taught inconsistently in LIS curriculum in the United States. This research sought to determine how the concept of service was viewed and treated in the Library and Information Science field, and based on the results, to make recommendations to information schools to improve librarians' education and training. The results reflected an unclear definition of the value of service at all levels (students, professionals and professors) and also suggested that Library and Information Science schools do not have a standard way to teach about this value.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The value of service has been present in Library and Information Science (LIS) for decades and has been recognized as one of the pillars of LIS, but how is it defined and applied in LIS today? Is service sufficiently taught in LIS programs in the United States? Is service still considered important for information professionals?

This exploratory study seeks:

- To determine how the concept of service is viewed and treated within current Library and Information Science curricula in the United States, and
- To make concrete recommendations to information schools to improve information professionals' education and training in service.

After looking for documents addressing the value of service and its application in LIS for almost a year and finding almost nothing, the author of this study collected information from students, professors, and information professionals working in libraries in the United States. She interviewed professors from the Business, Social Work, and Nursing Schools at the University of Texas at Austin (UT), to learn about the different ways professionals from other areas perceive and teach service. (The details of the methodology used in the collection of these data appear in Chapter 3).

Chapter 2 contains a literature review of LIS materials published in the 20th and 21st centuries in the United States and abroad that gives the reader a better idea of the importance of the value of service and the different approaches it has had through time. Chapter 4 presents the results organized according to each activity: interviews with LIS professors of the Top Ten universities, interviews with customer service managers of

Barnes & Noble and Schlotzsky's Deli, a questionnaire sent to electronic lists, and interviews with professors in other schools at UT. The last section in this chapter, "Big Picture Analysis," shows the principal findings and tendencies in the data. Even though this is not a definitive study, although the value of service has been present in LIS in the last decades, the different samples collected seem to indicate that information schools do not give service the importance it deserves. For that reason Chapter 5 contains specific recommendations to improve LIS programs.

Due to the lack of recent documents that study service in LIS, this thesis could be used as a starting point to make visible the importance of doing such research. This work could also help as a guide further research, helping identify possible sources of information or considering others that were not included here. The main point of this thesis, however is to raise awareness among information professionals of the importance of having clarity about what the value of service is for LIS and what its benefits are to LIS.

IS SERVICE IMPORTANT IN THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE FIELD (LIS)?

According to Richard Rubin (2000, p. 260):

Libraries and librarianship are about serving people and the society as a whole. Service to others has been the foundation of American librarianship for more than a hundred years, and this notion of service seems to apply to librarianship no matter what type of library or information service is involved.

In the same text, Rubin cited Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan¹ (1931) who proposed five laws of library science, including the idea that "libraries serve humanity"

¹ Indian librarian and educator (mathematician) who was considered the father of library science in India and whose contributions had worldwide influence (Mathematics Metaserver, 2001)

when he said the “dominant ethic that permeates librarianship is service to the individual, community, and society as a whole.”

Rubin’s point of view is echoed throughout Library and Information Science profession. Service has a prominent part in the mission statement of a majority of public, academic, and institutional libraries (See Appendix 1). The library of Auburn University in Alabama, for example, states clearly in its Values Statement “the Library provides superior service in an open, receptive, and courteous manner” (2003. p. 1). The Gelman Library System at George Washington University in Washington D.C. has “service” at the top of its list of values saying that they expect “quality and excellence in service that meets the expressed and anticipated needs of students and faculty.” Moreover, they also expect “quality and excellence in staff that demonstrates the highest standards of service, competence, and integrity” (2003, p. 1).

The value of service appears as an important element in the American Library Association (ALA) 1992 Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies. It appears in the section “Mission, Goals, and Objectives” within the list of characteristics or standards that a master’s program has to accomplish to be accredited:

Program objectives are stated in terms of educational results to be achieved and reflected:

I.2.4 The value of teaching and service to the advancement of the field.

I.2.8 The role of library and information services in a rapidly changing multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual society, including the role of serving the needs of underserved groups.

Section III, Faculty, also talks about service:

III.2 The school demonstrates the high priority it attaches to teaching, research, and service by its appointments and promotions; by encouragement of innovation in teaching, research, and service; and through provision of a stimulating learning and research environment.

Twenty of thirty professional codes of ethics from different countries of the world listed at the Codes of Ethics/Behavior page in the IFLA Web site (2003) contain service as an important element for professionals to consider, including the American Library Association's (ALA) Code of Ethics. On the American Society for Information Science's (1992) Professional Guidelines Web page, service is not listed as a responsibility of the information scientist or the Society, but it is mentioned in the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals' Code of Ethics (2004) as one of the conduct requirements for library and information science professionals. Finally, service also appears in the motto of the Library Honor Society Beta Phi Mu (2004), *Aliis inserviendo consumor*, meaning, "Consumed in the service of others."

In addition to the different conceptualizations of service, which will be addressed later in this work, its presence in the mission statement of national and international organizations demonstrates its importance. This fact also shows that recognizing the importance of this value and being service-oriented are professional expectations in LIS.

Clearly, service is important to LIS. Professional organizations and libraries mention service; and it is considered as an important element that should be included in university curricula. As a result, colleagues in the Library and Information Science field want to hire or to work with people who are friendly, who have communication skills to assist and understand users, and who recognize that a good relationship with users keeps the library or information service alive and account for its existence. Users from their point of view expect not only to be helped effectively but also by a person with a friendly

and helping attitude. Professionals in LIS and patrons expect to interact with people who know the importance of service and how to provide service because it is what is expected from the library as a social institution.

IS THERE A PROBLEM AND HOW BIG IS IT?

Sometimes as a user and sometimes as a librarian, the author has observed how the value of service has been assimilated, or not, by information professionals. As a user, she experienced problems finding information because of collection arrangement, a database with a difficult interface, or an unclear list of results. In order to overcome these challenges, it was necessary to talk with the reference librarians. Sometimes the librarian answered with good manners and interest in helping to resolve the question. Sometimes the responses did not have any relation to the question, or a scold was received instead of an answer.

As a librarian working with other professionals at the circulation or reference desk, she had a different experience. Occasionally, another librarian, after answering a patron's question, would comment to colleagues about how dumb a patron was for asking a certain question. Sometimes other colleagues got mad because they thought the question was about something obvious. If it was possible, when a group of librarians worked together, they chose the person with the best attitude toward users to be in charge of an information desk or in the reference section. Many librarians do not seem to want to deal with "people." There are even librarians who expect not to have to attend to users at all because patrons disrupt their "work."

Barry Bowes in *Between the Stacks* (as cited in Kneale, 2004, p.2) presents the following description of a librarian:

In the public psyche, a librarian is a woman of indeterminate age, who wears spectacles; a person with either a timorous disposition or an austere disposition,

wearing a long sleeved blouse buttoned to the neck; someone who loves silence, likes books, and suffers people. Librarians don't laugh. They are covered with a thin film of dust. They have pale skins, which, when touched (as if one ever could) might flake and prove to be reptilian scales.

Although stereotypes are frequently cruel exaggerations and generalizations they just as frequently have at least an element of truth. The omnipresence and consistency of the stereotype proves that the attitudes that originated it are held by patrons. Although not all librarians display these stereotypes, the way in which even a minority of librarians interacts with patrons' affects the way patrons perceive information professionals as a whole.

Why is it a problem that some professionals do not identify service as an important element in the profession or do not provide good service to patrons? The problem is not the failure to recognize the importance of service and the way service is provided; the problem is in its implications. Even a few unsatisfied patrons, much less angry ones, can begin a chain reaction which leads to fewer patrons, it then becomes increasingly difficult for the library to justify its existence, and because of that the library ends up with inadequate budgets, outdated technology, low staff salaries, and understaffing.

It is hard to identify the number of patrons who do not go to the library because they had bad experiences with unhelpful or unfriendly librarians. The impact of users' dissatisfaction is illustrated by Jeff and Val Gee (1999) in *Super Service: Seven Keys to Delivering Great Customer Service Even When You Don't Feel Like It, Even When They Don't Deserve It* when they ask:

Did you know that 68% of customers are lost because an employee didn't handle their complaint well? Research shows that, out of 25 dissatisfied customers:

- One customer complains.
- Twenty-four are dissatisfied but don't complain.
- Six of the 24 no complainers have 'serious' problems.

The 24 no complainers tell between 10 and 20 other people about their bad experience”

According to these points, the worst is that “from a pool of 25 customers, therefore, between 250 and 500 potential customers learn about the bad service” (J. & V. Gee, 1999, p. 10).

Every month the reference desk and sometimes the circulation desk submit a statistical report of how many people were helped in these departments. This information at the end of the year is used not only to plan the implementation or improvement of services and products of the library, but also to prove that the library is important for the community. Based on that, the local government will make the decision to keep the library open and to provide a budget for the library. The information about the library's affluence is also used to apply for funding in foundations and big organizations in order to implement programs to benefit the community. Therefore, a group of ten unsatisfied users can have a negative impact on a library's affluence, because service helps to justify a library's existence.

The existence of a library depends also on community support. Daniel Stuhlman says, “ No library can coast on the assumption that its services are vital to its city or institutions. Libraries are vital only if the community perceives them as vital” (2003, p. 1). When a library has the support of its community, it can reach its goals, and guarantee its existence. “Remember that just as a business wants to keep customers, libraries want to keep patrons because they pay the bills--through their taxes, tuition, dues, or institutional support” (p. 4). But again, like a vicious circle, in order to have patrons' support, it is essential to provide them with good service.

In addition to the two aforementioned situations, there is a third one: the incapacity of the library to accomplish its mission of serving people. Libraries exist in order to help people and information professionals recite that this is one of the most important values of the Library and Information Science discipline. However, when information professionals have to put service into practice, the idea does not seem to be clear for some of them. If patrons feel uncomfortable with the way they are treated, they are not going to come back to the library or support it, will the library then be able to achieve its mission with a lack of funds for paying staff salaries, technology, new acquisitions and maintain the basic products and services?

Patrons expect information professionals who not only help them to find the information they need with a friendly attitude but also to understand and articulate their research questions and needs. If information professionals turn their attention only toward developing products and services but forgetting the real reason of the existence of libraries, then many libraries would have to close their doors.

CHAPTER II

Background

WHAT IS SERVICE?

The concept of service can be defined from different points of view and from different approaches depending on the field of study. From the management perspective, Phillip Kotler and Gary Armstrong define service in *Principles of Marketing* as: "Any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything" (1996, p. 7). In this definition, Kotler and Armstrong do not identify what kind of activities should be performed in order to provide service, however they mention two important properties of this value: intangibility and lack of ownership.

James Fitzsimmons defines service from the marketing perspective as "a time-perishable experience, intangible experience, performed for a customer acting in the role of co-producer" (2003, p. 5). Once again, intangibility appears in the description of service, but Fitzsimmons also includes other important points. First is the idea that service is an experience, not only an activity. The word "experience" implies in this definition that service is an event lived through where the participant or participants are learning something. Second, he mentions that service occurs during a period of time. The "time" element enables us to understand service as part of reality, not only as an abstract idea in limbo. Finally, Fitzsimmons considers the customer not as an observer but as an active participant in the service experience. Valuing the information and guidance that the customer gives the service provider, and recognizing that service is not a

unidirectional process enriches the experience, thus helping the participants to reach their goals, whatever they are, easier and faster.

In the VNR's *Encyclopedia of Hospitality & Tourism* service is defined as “the act of helpful activity” (1998, p. 398). Even though this is a vague and tautological definition, the idea that service is for helping people has value. This word gives sense to the other two definitions that were more focused on the process itself but not on the goal.

From the LIS perspective Walt Crawford and Michael Gorman state “Service in librarianship implies attention to quality, a desire to live up to, and to surpass the expectations of library users” (1995, p. 12). Gorman and Crawford present two new elements of service in their definition of service used above: quality and meeting users’ expectations.

The problem with quality is that it is hard to measure because this concept varies from person to person. For this reason it would be necessary to adopt a standard like ISO 9004-2 provided by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to help set up a service quality system for organizations. Such standards act as a guide, a list of things to do in order to provide good quality service, without forgetting the unique characteristics of each institution and its community. Without using a standard it is hard to have consistency in service; the level of quality depends on different factors based on the priorities the managers or staff consider important. Meeting patrons’ expectations and quality are similar because both depend on culture, economic and educational levels, and other considerations. In order to provide good service according to the Gorman and Crawford definition, it is necessary to implement a study of users to know what the community expects from the library. What is good about their definition is that it makes clear that service is more complicated than a phrase in a mission statement. This definition helps clarify the difference between the abstract side of service and the

practical or concrete side of it, and it helps clarify the implications of not using appropriate language to define service and an appropriate method to implement it.

The American Library Association's (ALA) Code of Ethics reads that: "we provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests" (1995, p. 1). This is a more complex definition of service because the ALA includes qualities like accuracy, equitability, representation, balance, organization, access, and cordiality. This gives the reader the idea that service is more than being friendly and helpful while helping patrons resolve their information needs. Service is incorporated into the organizational culture where the staff is aware of the importance of service for the patrons and the organization.

Based on the definitions presented above, one can define service for the purpose of this study as an intangible and time-perishable experience carried out with the patron as a participant and as one that implies attention to quality and to meeting people's expectations by providing equitable access to information, organized resources, and accurate and courteous responses. Its main goal is to help others improve their quality of life through information.

A key to effective library service that these definitions do not explore is the important distinction between good and bad service. Good service in this case can be defined as the sum of empathy, listening, patience, and sensitivity shown by an information professional while interacting with patrons, it is meeting patrons' expectations in terms of personal relations. Bad service is the opposite. Although the professional may ultimately help the patron, indifference, impatience, insensitivity and inattentiveness can constitute bad service. An example of bad service would be when patrons come to the reference desk and a librarian does not pay much attention to their

question, tries to answer quickly, or does not look at the patrons' face when they talk. It is not hard to guess the impact of bad service: unsatisfied patrons who will not come back to the library or recommend it to others.

THE CONCEPT OF SERVICE IN THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE LITERATURE

In specialized dictionaries, encyclopedias, and glossaries for libraries published between 1973 and 2003, the definition of the values in LIS, and specifically service, is almost non-existent. The *Ranganathan Dictionary*, which is a compilation of terms used by Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan from his works from 1931 to 1965, includes a brief definition of service: "Service is an action to satisfy a want" (1993, p. 96). In other dictionaries and encyclopedias there are definitions of "service quality," (Keenan and Johnson, 2000, p. 221) and "customer care" (Prytherch, 2000, p. 203), both definitions taken from the management marketing perspective. The fact that there are so few definitions included in encyclopedias, dictionaries, and glossaries could be interpreted as a sign of the implicitness of the meaning of service for the professionals or a lack of attention to the importance of service in LIS.

Although it is difficult to find definitions of service for information professionals, characteristics of service do appear in the literature. Service appears in documents about expectations of librarians in the future. In *The Whole Library Handbook*, proficiency in communication and interpersonal skills appear as two of the major competencies for librarians in the 1990's (Eberhart, 1991, p.71). Even though service is not directly mentioned, these are important characteristics of it. Barbara Lovato-Gassman says that for the 21st Century "we want librarians who are flexible, enthusiastic, have good stress

management skills, are service oriented and have excellent interpersonal skills” (2003, p. 47).

By going back in time to review materials produced in the late 19th century and between 1940 and 1975, one finds more detailed information about values in LIS, its mission and the expected characteristics of people interested in being part of librarianship. For example in 1876 Samuel Green wrote:

Certain mental qualities are requisite or desirable in library officers who mingle with readers. Prominent among these is a courteous disposition, which will disclose itself in agreeable manners. Sympathy, cheerfulness, and patience are needful. ... A librarian should be as unwilling to allow an inquirer to leave the library with his question unanswered as a shop-keeper is to have a customer go out of his store without making any purchase (p. 79)

For Green, the principal mission of the librarian in that time was principally to give assistance, to help people find the information they were seeking to resolve their information needs. In this case, the librarian was conceived as a mediator between information and patrons. In the same year Melvil Dewey gives a more complex definition in “The Profession.” He sees the librarian as an important actor in society: “The best librarians are no longer men of merely negative virtues. They are positive, aggressive characters standing in the front rank of the educators of their communities, side by side with the preachers and the teachers” (p. 5). For Dewey one of the responsibilities of the librarians is to enhance in their patrons’ lives by making accessible the information they need, by urging patrons to read and learn, and also by providing them with the best information resources available.

Gaston Litton’s *El Bibliotecario, The Librarian* (1973) is another good example. He describes the principles and values of librarianship presenting a profile of the librarians’ personality. Some of the characteristics he mentioned are helpfulness, communicativeness, approachability, altruism, and good manners (p. 32). Lasso de la

Vega describes the work of librarians with the Latin words *Sic vos non vobis*, meaning "Thus we work, but not for ourselves" (1952, p. 426). Another example appears in the book *Fundación y Organización de Bibliotecas (Foundation and Organization of Libraries)* by Alfredo Console, who describes the mission of the librarian as "to create with books a library for public, and through a good service, a public for the library" (1954, p.16).

Years later, Claire Guinchat and Michael Menou write that:

The information specialist serves users and hence needs a gift for and interest in human relations. In many cases, information work is primarily a matter of teamwork. But his personal relations with the users and producers of information have even more decisive influence on the effectiveness of the service. An information specialist must be capable of understanding other people, mixing socially and inspiring confidence – in short, of communicating (1983, p. 329).

Another writer with a unique point of view about service is Barbara Chernick who thinks that one of the two basic characteristics of library staff is "an interest in working with people." Chernick also says "practically all staff members are involved with bringing people and these informational materials together. If they do not like being with people or helping people, library staff members will not be successful in fulfilling this library function" (1992, p.14).

A brief analysis of the publications compiled by Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) from 1998 to 2003 reveals that "service" has been studied from different perspectives. The search term "service," under the descriptor "category," yielded a total of 606 documents. Duplicate records were removed; book reviews were deleted by using a Boolean search. Manually, titles of institutions or products that included the word "service" in it were deleted as well, leaving a total of 239 records. Using the controlled vocabulary provided by the same index as a guide, the total number of records was divided in 19 categories (See Appendix 2). The category with the highest

percentage is “Service quality” with 34.43% followed by “Customer service” with 25.82%. Only 36 documents included information about service as defined in this study (15.06% of the total). If one compares this number to the total number of records in LISA, that is 242,000 in 2002 (Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, n.d.), it is only a 0.01%, a very small percentage for a topic that seems to be important for LIS professionals.

If one reads each document however, the majority of authors do not define service or they do it so vaguely; the terms are used with a totally different meaning. This is the case of the documents that appear under the descriptor “service quality,” where approximately 89.28% of them refer to *Quality of Service (QoS)* which is a “capability of a network to provide better service to selected network traffic over various technologies, including Frame Relay, Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM), Ethernet and 802.1 networks, SONET, and IP-routed networks that may use any or all of these underlying technologies” (CISCO, 2003, p. 1). When reviewing the documents that appear listed under the “customer service” descriptor, it is possible to find many materials about difficult patrons, project satisfaction or documents that study the satisfaction of patrons with a specific service, such as Call Centers.

The literature contains many descriptive studies of personal characteristics desired for information professionals, but documents addressing the values of LIS, including service are rare. In the literature there are also user studies, new services to increase patrons’ satisfaction, marketing strategies to meet patrons’ expectations, and ways of orienting the library staff efforts towards helping patrons reach their goals. In some documents, the authors suggest that management techniques can create a satisfied and motivated staff in order to provide good service and can also provide training about how to provide good service in libraries. These documents could also be grouped into two :

1. Research and recommendations to resolve a specific situation related to service and

2. Manuals to learn how to provide service to users. The majority of documents about these topics seem to be oriented to information professionals who are already working in libraries or those who just got their first new job as reference librarians.

In short, the literature review shows that service is considered an important element in Library and Information Science but the concept is not well articulated. Authors have included different elements in their definitions of service, and also have different approaches to it. Based on these results, there are some questions that come to mind, e.g. if there is not a homogeneous idea of what service is, how does this affect LIS? How are students educated about this topic when they are in a university program? This study seeks to answer these and other questions.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

After searching for previous studies about service in LIS and finding little, the author decided to do an exploratory study in order to collect data from different sources to learn how information professionals define service and how it is taught in the LIS curriculum. She used the following data-collection methods: first, informal interviews were conducted with faculty from 9 of the top ten university programs in LIS determined according to the US News and World Reports, to determine if the value of service is part of some of their courses (See Appendix 3). Her thesis advisor suggested some of the contacts in each school, and the remaining professors were chosen based on their position at the school (preference given to the higher ranks such as the associate deans, department directors or department chairs). In two cases it was necessary to call the universities to ask for appropriate faculty members to contact. Because e-mail messages sent to different faculty members did not solicit responses.

A draft list of faculty contacts having been assembled, the researcher made first contact with them to verify if these were the appropriate people to contact for the purpose of this study. After they answered this message, a new e-mail was sent containing the initial definition of service created for this study:

Service is having patrons' needs always present while performing every task in every department in the library. It is assisting patrons to resolve their information needs with a friendly attitude. Service is the sum of being helpful, friendly and respectful of patrons' needs. It is a positive way of thinking and perceiving patrons. Service is a conviction that patrons' satisfaction about services and products is the reason for the library's existence.

Respondents were asked if they were teaching from this point of view service either in general or as part of a specific course. They were also asked if they were teaching techniques like empathy², active listening³, and sensitivity⁴.

Professors in business, social work, and nursing were interviewed as part of this study. These professions were chosen because service seemed important to the profession. The Social Work and Nursing schools were chosen from a list of possible departments where service seemed to be a strong component of the profession. The professors selected were teaching introductory courses or courses with a service component, as indicated by department Web sites. In some cases, the faculty members also suggested talking with another professor because of his or her professional experience or interests. Faculty members were contacted by e-mail, and the interviews were conducted in each professor's office. Before the start of each interview, the interviewer briefly explained the goals of the research and read the definition of service proposed for this study to the interviewee so he or she could have a better sense of the word "service" in the context of this study. After that, the researcher asked the interview questions (see Appendix 4), and took notes by hand, (the interviews were not recorded) verifying at the end of the meeting that the information in the notes represented the interviewee's thoughts.

² "Empathy is the process by which a person momentarily pretends to himself that he is another person, projects himself into the perceptual field of the other person, imaginatively puts himself in the other person's place, in order that he may get an insight into the other person's probable behavior in a given situation" (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985, p. 7).

³ "This type of listening involves a person (typically a therapist) listening to a person and then responding to the person using techniques such as paraphrasing. In this way the listener restates what has been said in order to demonstrate empathy, show that he/she was listening and understanding what was being said" (Psychology Glossary, 2003, p.1).

⁴ "Sensitivity is the ability to predict what an individual will feel, say, and do about you, himself, and others" (Smith, 1966, p. 9).

Third, as recommended by the thesis advisor, an e-mail message was sent to the JESSE list (<http://listserv.utk.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=jesse>), which is a well-known email discussion group with 1153 members (Listserv, n.d.), for Library and Information Science faculty members and students (See Appendix 5). The message sought to collect information about professionals' and students' views of the importance of service in Library and Information Science. Before the questionnaire was sent to JESSE, it was tested on The Insider a list with 408 members⁵ including faculty and students of the School of Information at the University of Texas, and the "El Corazón de Tejas" which is the list of the Central Texas Chapter of REFORMA, and has 64 members⁶. This list consists principally of information professionals who work at public and academic libraries, and the author of this study is a member of both lists. No problems were encountered in the pilot test, so no changes were made to the questionnaire. Thus the same questionnaire that appears in Appendix 5 was sent to all 3 groups. Originally, the results of the test were not considered part of the research, but, because no major changes were made, and because of the interesting responses students and professionals sent, their responses were incorporated. The results of the lists were coded manually in order to extract patterns from the data (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 131). There were no duplication of answers between the professors that responded to the questions posted in the JESSE list and the ones that answer the e-mails sent to the top ten universities. Finally the data were organized into tables with mutually exclusive categories based on the patterns. Each pattern was differentiated from others according to the types of keywords used by the respondents.

⁵ Vanessa Chavez. (vanescha@ischool.utexas.edu). (2004, Nov. 18). Number of Members Subscribed to The Insider. E-mail from Diana Miranda-Murillo. (diana@correo.co.cr).

⁶ Margo Gutierrez. (mgutierrez@mail.utexas.edu). (2004, Oct. 06). Pregunta acerca de la Lista. E-mail from Diana Miranda-Murillo. (diana@correo.co.cr).

Finally, customer service managers from Barnes & Noble and Schlotzsky's were interviewed to discern how the staff in those businesses is trained to provide service and the impact of their training methods on their clients (See Appendix 6). This would also help to make a comparison between different approaches (business and academy) when talking about the service. Barnes & Noble was chosen because this company has been known for innovations in the bookstores market. Barnes & Noble designed a different ambiance for their clients providing them with a place to sit, browse, or read books, while drinking coffee and eating. They added-on those elements to the traditional services they were providing to clients in order to increase their satisfaction. Schlotzsky's was chosen among other fast food companies because it is a local franchise and has been known for its diversification of products and services for users. They also designed a different ambiance for their customers, making their restaurants look different from the rest of the fast food companies. They used wood materials and pastel colors that invite clients to stay and relax. Moreover, because it is smaller than Burger King and Mc Donald's, communication with them was expected to be much easier. The first communication in both cases was by phone, and in the case of Schlotzsky's e-mail was also used. Interviews were conducted in the interviewees' offices, and the researcher took notes and verified at the end of the meeting that the notes represented the interviewee's ideas fairly. Participation in this study was completely voluntary. Participants' names were kept anonymous to help them feel more relaxed and confident about the information they were providing, thus improving the veracity of their responses.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Analysis

As described in the methodology chapter, four methods were used to collect data for this exploratory study:

- Communication through e-mail with faculty of nine of the top ten universities in LIS
- Interviews with Barnes & Noble and Schlotszky's Deli customer service managers
- A questionnaire sent to JESSE, El Corazon de Tejas, and The Insider electronic lists
- Interviews with professors from the schools of Nursing, Social Work, and Business at UT Austin.

This chapter presents the data then analyzes it.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION WITH FACULTY OF NINE OF THE TOP TEN UNIVERSITIES⁷

Some LIS professors at the top ten universities had difficulty distinguishing service from other related topics, as determined by information collected. One wrote in her e-mail "Our entire school is based on a user-centric approach to information." Other said, "Each of our required courses has a strong people/service orientation. Many of our electives are people/service oriented. Even the strong information technology courses start with the question of information technology/systems for whom?" Another professor commented, "I would say that the service orientation is embedded in many of our

⁷The School of Information at University of Texas at Austin is not included since the author studies there.

courses.” These answers seem to reveal that faculty tends to have an unclear understanding of service. On the one hand, they conflate service and user-centered design, which are related but distinct. On the other hand, the respondents assume that service is effectively integrated in many classes although the examples they provide indicate that service for them might be a variety of different things but not service as defined for this study.

In Table 1-a there is a summary of the courses that have a service component in the top ten universities according to the responses collected through the questionnaire. Only students in reference courses seem to be studying techniques like empathy, active listening and open-ended questioning that might help them to develop their knowledge of the value of service (See Table 1, Appendix 7). But what of students who do not take reference courses and are more focused on cataloguing, software development, or information science? It seems that education about techniques to help internalize and practice service is more related to librarianship than to information science or information technology.

Table 1-a (Summary)

How is service taught in the top ten universities in library and information science?

University	Number of courses involving service	Reference courses teaching empathy and other similar techniques
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	4	1
University of Michigan at Ann Arbor	Did not say	
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	All courses	
Syracuse University	3	1
University of Pittsburgh at Main Campus:	No answer	
Indiana University at Bloomington:	Did not say	
Rutgers University at New Brunswick	All courses	
University of Wisconsin at Madison:	3	1
Drexel University (PA.):	No answer	

If only reference librarians know about the importance of the value of service, what happens when they ask co-workers from other departments in the library for user-oriented products and services? Valuing service is important, even for behind-the-scenes staff, because the lack of it can cause delays, misunderstandings between people from different departments, and confusion. While reference librarians think about satisfying patrons so they return to the library, their colleagues are concerned about accurately describing a book in the catalog, building a database, developing a new circulation system, or adapting the latest technology to the institution needs. All these problems will be reflected in inconsistent service, thus affecting users' perception of the library as a whole.

RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH BARNES & NOBLE AND SCHLOTZSKY'S DELI

Comparing libraries and businesses: is there something to learn from businesses?

For the Barnes & Noble customer service manager, service is a way to make people feel valued by keeping eye contact (culturally specific), listening with attention, showing that you are making an effort to help them, and by making them feel that their requests are important. Through service, this manager wants to resolve a need and ensure that the customer leaves the store happy and satisfied; a good attitude adds value to the sale. Even though there is a standard of service in the organization, each store adapts the way they provide service according to local expectations.

The Schlotzsky's Deli Customer Service manager describes service as an attitude committed to meeting customer's expectations so patrons will return. A product for this manager is not complete without service. Service is the principal element that keeps an organization or product alive in the market where similar organizations offer similar products and compete for almost the same clients. In order to provide good customer

service, it is important to be familiar with the product, to be honest, to be conscious in providing a nice environment, to be understanding and to appreciate diversity.

Based on these definitions, one wonders: how different are libraries from businesses? Table 2 enumerates the principal characteristics of the three definitions to better visualize similarities and differences.

Table 2
Comparison of Definitions of Service

	Definition of service for this thesis	Barnes & Noble	Schlotzsky's
Accuracy of information	X		
Equitable service policies	X		
Equitable access	X		
Unbiased responses	X		
Cordiality	X	X	X
Helping others	X		
Non-transferability of ownership	X		
Resolution of a problem		X	
Meeting client expectations	X	X	X
Making customer feel valued		X	
Honesty			X
Providing a nice environment			X
Appreciation of diversity		X	X
Knowing the product		X	X
Service important for survival	X	X	X
Service as a way to educate customers			X

There is an important element present in both libraries and businesses: the sense of service as a way to survive, or compete with similar organizations in the market. Both mentioned that service is a way to distinguish themselves from other similar companies

that offer similar products. The company that provides more efficient and personalized service will have and retain more customers.

Libraries provide service because this is part of their mission. They also rely indirectly on patrons' satisfaction in order to sustain funding. Although libraries do not always compete among themselves like businesses, they do compete with television, the Internet, and bookstores as well as other recreational and educational activities. If libraries provide poor service, people will look for information in other places or use their free time in more satisfying activities.

"Meeting client expectations" is another shared element. In Barnes & Noble, for example, one of the customer service goals is "book in hand." This goal seeks to make customers satisfied, even when they do not have the book they originally sought. If a Barnes & Noble store does not have the book, they try to offer one on the same topic or find the original book at another store and get it for the customer. This extra effort lets the customer feel appreciated, leaves a positive impression, improves the prospects of a return visit, and makes it likely that the store will be recommended to the customer's friends and family.

Librarians grounded in good service also do their best to meet patrons' expectations and share the goal "book in hand," although with a different approach. When a patron looks for a book that the library does not have, librarians check availability through interlibrary loan, review the electronic books collection, and look for materials about the same topic or by the same author. Their main goal is that the patron leaves the library with the satisfaction of finding some useful material.

If one compares the elements displayed in the chart of the different definitions, there is some targeting of similar goals but using different words. For example one could equate "honesty" with "unbiased responses," and "equitable access" with "appreciation

of diversity.” But other characteristics, such as “helping others” and “non-transferability of ownership,” make the difference between libraries and businesses more clear. The goal of service for library and information science is to help others, while in businesses service is an add-on to the product itself to make a profit. While businesses have transferability of ownership, libraries have patrons who borrow rather than buy. In brief, businesses use service for profit, and libraries do not.

Service has been adopted by different kinds of professions in many fields, and it is present even in people’s lives. The difference rests in the meaning of this value for LIS and the tools used to put service into practice. Although service is important for both libraries and businesses, it means something different for each. Service in libraries represents the mission of the institution and the professionals in the LIS; service in businesses improves the market position of a particular product. Some information professionals already have implemented and applied some of the techniques used in business in libraries, like marketing, for example. In most LIS schools there are courses where students may learn how to manage libraries and students learn many theories and techniques used in business. In the case of service, it seems that information professionals can learn more about this topic from the business field but it is important to be aware of the differences in the conceptualization of service so libraries do not end up acting as businesses.

Everyone needs training

All Barnes & Noble and Schlotzsky’s Deli staff members are trained to provide good customer service, no matter whether the person works at the back or directly with customers. Training consists of material about how to become a good service provider according to each company’s standards. Both companies have a cross-training system where everyone learns how to do every task at the bookshop or restaurant. Both regularly

test the staff as a group to discuss how they would resolve a problem or approach a certain situation.

Both managers think that it is important to provide the same training to all employees, even if an employee is already good at working with people. Even employees with strong service predispositions may not respond according to the company's expectations in all circumstances. An untrained employee may feel more pressure and anxiety when responding to a problem for the first time if he or she is unfamiliar with the company's standards. Having an employee who was not equally trained in how to provide service can affect the whole team's performance thus leaving the customer with a negative perception of the company.

Library and Information Science seems not to have uniform expectations and training for all students on how to provide service. Professionals in different departments have a different idea of what service is. For example, service means something different for reference librarians than for cataloguers and this different approach makes their communication and their work more difficult to accomplish (Hristov, 2004). Stephanie Ognar enumerates some of the problems that emerge as a result from the division of these departments in libraries: "Inefficiencies, redundancies, miscommunication, competition and a general lack of understanding and respect (2003, p. 38). Staff members in these departments have the intention to do their best, but they sometimes work against each other (Kimmel, 1998), negatively affecting the library as a whole and its patrons.

One significant root of this problem is that there is not a shared idea of what service means in LIS and how to provide service to patrons. As seen in business, when employees have a shared idea of the principles and values of the organization, generally imparted thorough a common education to internalize these values, and put them in practice, many misunderstandings and delays are eliminated. Thus, employees and

customers feel increased satisfaction and perceive a consistent, organized and strong organization.

Good service requires constant reinforcement

In both businesses, training is reinforced periodically by quizzes, internal contests, and rewards. Schlotzsky's Deli managers have an electronic list where they communicate successful or difficult experiences they faced while working with costumers or other managers. Sharing their stories helps managers to think about how to resolve the unexpected and how to apply the principles of service according to the community's and the company's expectations.

Information professionals attend conferences or training where they discuss new trends in LIS and new ideas or advances in performing a specific task. There is also a variety of electronic lists and blogs that host discussions of current topics in LIS. The difference is that business staff knows that courses, rewards, and contests are oriented specifically toward service; in libraries, service is mentioned but is not often the center of a course or the reason for praise. Moreover, not all LIS professionals have the opportunity or the time to attend conferences or training, or to participate in electronic lists. Library staff is frequently busy performing multiple tasks, maintaining the products and services the library currently offers, and implementing new ones. If the staff is not reminded about the importance of providing good service to users, it is easy to forget about it, not internalize it or put it into practice.

It seems that the value of service has been implicit in the field of library and information science, but it has not been materialized or operationalized. Because of its importance for professionals and patrons, service should be considered part of the day-to-day life in information organizations. Rewards, training, or any other method would help

staff to be constantly aware of the reason for providing good service and to think about service not only as an abstract idea but as a way to implement services and for staff to perform their job.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO JESSE LIST

As described in the methodology section, a questionnaire was sent to three different electronic lists: The Insider, El Corazón de Tejas, and JESSE. Five responses were collected from the Insider list, six from *El Corazón de Tejas* and 12 from the JESSE list. The questions were:

1. Do you consider that service-orientation is part of a person's natural disposition or can it be taught to all professionals?
2. Do you think librarians are generally well educated during their degree program to be service-oriented?
3. The curriculum in the field of Library and Information Science is broad. Do you consider it important to train all professionals as service providers or only those who are going to be working with library patrons face-to-face? Why?

The instructions sent to the JESSE list included a request to post answers to the list to generate discussion about the topic; however, all participants sent their messages off-list (i.e., directly to the author). Their responses are different and more diverse than those collected from the other lists.

It is almost unanimous that, if someone is willing to learn, he or she can be trained (See Table 3). As one respondent wrote "the receptiveness of the individual is critical to the learning." Thus, with the exception of the truly antisocial, it seems reasonable to

expect that with proper training all information professionals can obtain a strong service orientation.

Table 3

Question 1: Do you consider that service-orientation is part of a person's natural disposition or can be taught to all professionals?

Responses	The Insider	El Corazón de Tejas	JESSE List
Only a natural disposition	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Only as a result of training	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (17%)
It is a mix of both factors	5 (100%)	6 (100%)	9 (75%)
No answer	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Total	(100%) (n=5)	(100%) (n=6)	100% (n=12)

Teaching the value of service does not seem to have been one of the priorities of the library and information science curriculum in the United States. Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents think that information professionals are not well taught to provide service. Seven participants explain more their answers and they seem to have a clear idea of the reason for this problem. For example, one respondent writes: “I think some faculty have a disdain not only for patrons but for librarians. This can be especially true in research institutions, where the only respected approach is ‘research,’ not patron centered service.” Another participant recognized not only the problem but also identify the benefits of educating LIS professionals in how to provide service: “more emphasis in library school should be placed on teaching students how to provide customer service

with a NON-INTIMIDATING/Brainstorming attitude. So the patron has a good experience rather than a bad one. I think friendliness and service are the keys to guaranteeing the library is seen as a place of service instead of a warehouse for old books.”

Table 4

Question 2: Do you think librarians are generally well taught during their degree program to be service-oriented?

Responses	The Insider	El Corazón de Tejas	JESSE List
Yes	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	4 (33%)
No	3 (60%)	3 (50%)	1 (8%)
It is hard to say	0 (0%)	2 (33%)	5 (42%)
It is something learned at work	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)
Should not be taught	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
No answer	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Total	100% (n=5)	100% (n=6)	100% (n=12)

Seven participants think that it is hard to say whether service is well taught in library and information science schools. For example, one respondent says, “I think I do a good job with this. What goes on in other programs, I cannot say.” One participant supports his thoughts on their observations: “My guess is that some are and some aren’t, based on what I see in LIS.” These responses and the uncertainty demonstrated by some

of the participants demonstrate a lack of education about how to provide service in LIS curricula in the United States.

The diversity of responses received for this question, also reflected previously in Table 3, suggests a problem with the meaning of the word “service” in LIS. In the previous paragraph, one participant used “service” as a synonym for “friendliness” and a “smiley” attitude. For another, service is being focused on users, such as patrons from different cultures or with disabilities, and taking their needs into consideration. One respondent related service with marketing, while another states, “at a Masters degree level the idea of training people to be nice and smile when providing good service is far too naive and non-intellectual.” For her, service was limited to the basic training at McDonald’s for a burger flipper or at Wal-Mart for a greeter. These are just some of the different approaches to service reflected in the answers that reveal the lack of clarity about the concept of service and being a service provider. Implications include misunderstandings among colleagues when trying to design or improve services and products at the library, delays in the implementation of new services and products, confusion about the goals library staff must follow as a team to provide good service, and mediocre final results.

Table 5 shows that information professionals are very receptive to everyone receiving training in service. Two contestants noted that students will never know where they are going to work; they can have a preference, but, with budget cuts, layoffs, and a limited job market, they may be hired to work directly interacting with people or be transferred to another position within the library where they have to interrelate with users, and they have to be prepared for that. Another participant say that all librarians have to be aware of and trained about service in order to understand the importance of their work for patrons and to perform their jobs with the patrons in mind. Three contestants even

recognize that everyone in a library is there to provide service, some in front of the curtain, and others behind the scenes; in the end, however, if everyone receives training in service, the whole institution will benefit. The fact that students and professionals accept the importance of universal training could be considered as recognition of a need in LIS, a gap to be filled or fixed, (in this case through education and training). Having a more integrated idea of service in libraries would allow staff to respond to the needs of their patrons more assertively and effectively, face problems with more confidence, and develop higher quality products for patrons.

Table 5

Question 3: The curriculum in the field of Library and Information Science is broad. Do you consider it important to train all professionals as service providers or only those who are going to be working with library patrons face-to-face? Why?

Responses	The Insider	El Corazón de Tejas	JESSE List
Everybody in LIS should be trained	5 (100%)	6 (100%)	9 (75%)
Only those interacting with people	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Everybody should be taught about the value of service but only those interacting with people should be trained as service providers.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
No answer	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (17%)
Total	100% (n=5)	100% (n=6)	100% (n=12)

Based on the responses, it looks like service is still important and essential for LIS because people still feel they need to learn more about it to improve their job performance.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSORS FROM THE SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS, NURSING, AND SOCIAL WORK

Differences and similarities in the concept of service in different fields of study

- ***Business School***

Service seems to be the “icing on the cake” in business; although it is important, service does not represent the core of LIS. The first business school professor interviewed views service “as a product but also as an add-on to a product.” This comment coincides with the second professor who defined service as “something perishable, an experience where the client participates as a co-producer, not only as a spectator.” He added “service is the sum of marketing, behavioral aspects of users, good interaction between customers and employees, and use of technology in order to empower customers and efficiency.” Even though the second definition has more elements, it also makes clear that service is considered only one of the ways to reach a business’s goal to increase profit.

- ***Social Work and Nursing***

Service is one of the values at the core of professions like nursing and social Work. When interviewed the Nursing School professor said that service “is the group of actions, assessments, and wise decisions a professional makes in order to help another person to reach his or her level of competence and independence. Without service nursing would not exist.” One of the social work professors said that service is one of the most

important values in their mission statement. For her service “is a way to help a person to achieve his or her goals.” So, both social work and nursing seek, through service, to allow a person to return to productive participation in society. Everything in both professions seems to focus on the idea of “helping” or “caring for” others.

Nursing and social work (like LIS) are considered part of the so-called “service professions” or “pink-collar professions.” This coincidence could explain the similarities between them. These professions are female-dominated, have a similar historical background, and have struggled with similar problems: small wages (compared with men’s wages in the same profession), occupational segregation, a lack of professional recognition, and short career ladders (Howe, 1977). According to Ann Helton Stromberg:

These professions were originated in the mid-nineteenth century, in a patriarchal society with a powerful sex role ideology that viewed women as especially sensitive, moral and self-sacrificing by nature – an ideology that, when a need for women’s labor arose, could be adapted to support their work in the serving professions (1988, p. 207).

Women were included in these professions responding to the sex-role stereotype in that period of time; they were hired to concern themselves with how to assist people. The impact of these stereotypes of women in social work, nursing and also LIS could be the reason why service is considered an essential part of these professions. Moreover, these stereotypes could also influence the way professionals in social work and nursing often relate the value of service to the concepts of “helping” and “caring” about clients or patrons with a more altruistic approach than that in business.

Library and information science struggle

Library and information science seems to be a hybrid, with elements characteristic of both for-profit and non-profit. As a result, professionals in LIS struggle in defining and putting service into practice. For social work and nursing, high quality service helps ensure that the client is satisfied and happy, so the client does not need to come back. These characteristics are the opposite of business and LIS, where quality service helps ensure that the client is happy but also that she or he wants to come back. But, although business is for profit, LIS, nursing and social work are non-profit. All of them, however, have similar goals when talking about service: to make the client or patron happy by serving and making him or her feel satisfied. Thus one sees that LIS has characteristics of business and also of the nursing and social work.

Libraries traditionally have provided services to communities and, through that service, much like social work and nursing, have helped people improve their quality of life. Libraries, however, can be seen as businesses also, since in order to survive they need patrons to come back in order to get funding. These mixed motives in LIS can create confusion in the way professionals conceive service.

In the responses collected from the electronic lists one of the participants said, “We are a service industry but don’t usually get training/teaching on how to deal with customers, customer problems, and problem solving.” Other professionals used terms like “marketing” to suggest activities they consider important to improving service. Another person answered, “Service is something that can be trained. Why don’t you look at the business literature?” So, there are a lot of references to the business area when information professionals answered questions about service, but, there were also people with the idea that the word “service” means to be friendly and helpful and that service is the reason of the existence for libraries. If libraries themselves are complex systems that

have their own characteristics but which have absorbed characteristics from other fields of study, that makes it even more relevant to define the value of service for LIS and the best ways to put it into practice, that way all professionals could have similar goals and the Library and Information Science discipline itself could become stronger.

Education and training on providing service

- ***Business***

One might think that in business school, service would be emphasized throughout the courses or by teaching a core course about service; however, there are contradictory ideas in terms of service education in the UT Austin Business School. When the first business professor answered the question about how faculties teach service, he said that it is not taught because Business School is meant to teach more complex and abstract topics. He considered teaching or training about service to be simple and easy and that it could be learned at the work place during the first six months of employment.

The second professor indicated that there is an elective course called “Service Management” where all the important aspects of how to give good service are discussed in class. He also discussed his disagreement with his colleague’s idea that service should be part of an employee’s training when he or she is hired. He says that a member of an organization, managers included, needs to know how to provide service in order to guide the company toward its goal.

- ***Social Work and Nursing***

Students in Social Work and Nursing Schools are educated about service in similar ways. The UT Austin Nursing School has one required class, and Social Work School has three required classes where all students learn techniques like active listening,

empathy, and sensitivity among other skills. These techniques help them to interact more effectively with their clients to resolve problems, to know them better, and to establish better communication and understanding. Students of both schools also learn about service through practice because they study part-time and do field work part-time. This practice helps them understand that service goes beyond a face-to-face interaction and that service also requires them to have a spectrum of knowledge to be able to assess different situations and make the best decisions for the benefit of the clients.

In social work and nursing it seems that students and professors are more aware of the importance of service as part of their professions and are able to respond to what other professionals in these fields expect from them in this matter. The fact that students are trained to see service as an integral part of their jobs is notable. With some exceptions however, people in general are not in touch with these professionals often enough to know the results of their training.

- ***Practice: a way to learn about service***

Social Work and Nursing have found that practice is an effective way to learn about service. LIS training is similar to business training because it does not seem to have a standardized approach to teaching service in its curricula. Professionals of Nursing and Social Work seem to have a homogeneous idea about service, and it is included in both curricula in required classes for their students. In both cases, they are very clear about how service is taught in these courses and the importance of them for students and their professions. What draws one's attention is that these professions where field work is only suggested in the curriculum are the professions with problems identifying the importance of teaching service. The key element in social work and

nursing appears to be the time students practice working directly with people, meaning that they have part-time classes and part-time fieldwork. Offering students both a mix of theory about the value of service and the techniques to put that theory into practice seems to be effective in helping students learn about its importance for the professions, their clients and themselves as professionals.

BIG PICTURE ANALYSIS

Service without practice can be abstract and confusing

The respondents on the Insider and El Corazón de Tejas lists reacted different from the respondents on the JESSE list. Three of the participants from El Corazón de Tejas said that the questions were interesting and observed that they were a little challenging because they do not think about topics like this very often. One of the participants even sent a message saying that she discussed the questions with her staff and thus raised their awareness about the value of service. Most of the responses were clear, right on target, and, because the answers were very homogenous, it seems that all participants from these two lists shared very similar concepts about the meaning of the word “service” in LIS.

In the case of the JESSE list, whose members are mostly professors and some students, half of the participants said that they had difficulties with terms like “service” or “service-oriented” used in the questions. They felt that the questions were abstract and imprecise. For this reason, one of them wrote a long message explaining her answers from multiple points of view, while two people express confusion about the meaning of the words used for this survey.

Two participants from this list also expressed asserted that this study is inappropriate for LIS. One of them said that he felt uncomfortable with the use of the term “service orientation” used in the first question because, as one respondent noted: “Notions like ‘service orientation’ are too general and meaningless. Name a profession that is not ‘service-orientation’ bent. It is little wonder the library profession has so little respect when this is how so many define their work.” The other one considered this research as “non-professional” because the service should not be taught in LIS, “You don’t waste a whole degree training people in service!” she said. According to her, “service is not even taught in business schools.” She continued “Why not go to the McDonalds University or work in a Wal-Mart if you want to learn how to provide service? This hang-up on library service issues is misplaced and is not based on any real research. And you wonder why the MLS is not regarded as a valid academic master’s degree and non-intellectual.” However it is precisely the academic discipline and point of view that will allow LIS to understand, perform, train, etc., in a way that is appropriate and unique to LIS. Otherwise, one can expect that information professionals will find models for service from some other discipline or field that are not always appropriate.

These reactions bring some questions to mind: do today’s information professionals not want to see themselves as being in the service of others? Is service today seen as a weakness instead of a strength? Is service considered a menace because other professionals and society have not respected LIS? Although only two academic participants reacted so negatively, one may ask: how many colleagues think the same as they and do not manifest their thoughts openly because of social desirability?

One of the professors from the Social Work School said, “It is important to be clear about the professional identity to be able to know how to help.” There is no question that LIS has been changing and it is going to keep changing, but it is important

to recognize that there are elements in a profession that do not change, such as its values and its mission. The negation of the core principles of LIS is not the way to improve this discipline and to make others give value to the Library and Information Science profession.

Another reason for the differences between the responses from the lists might be the ongoing debate between theory and practice. The differentiation between these two aspects has its roots in Plato and Aristotle's different conceptions of knowledge: *episteme* (theory) and *phronesis* (practice). The debate centers around the dilemma about which one better resolves the inherent problems of each discipline (Kessels & Korthagen, 2001). This dilemma has been present throughout history and has impacted the way in which people conceive some fields of knowledge, for example "high and low professions," and has also caused the separation of research and practice in U.S. universities in the first half of the nineteenth century (Schön, 1995). People have been taught to conceive theory and practice as two different things that are hard to combine (Kessels & Korthagen, 2001), conceptions that one could see reflected in the results of this exploratory study. In the El Corazón and The Insider lists, the majority of participants are already working in libraries, but participants from the JESSE list are mostly faculty members, with a perspective oriented toward research and education.

A similar observation was noted with the data from the professors in business and the customer service managers. For professors in business, service represents only an "add-on" to a product, but, for the customer service managers, service was considered the engine that moves their business. Once again, it seems that there is a difference between those who work in an organization and those who study the field, in this case, business. People who not only theorize about service but also put it into practice, such as

practitioners in social work and nursing, seem to recognize its importance for the organization, as well as the techniques to best put service into practice.

Clarity in the meaning of service is fundamental for LIS

The information compiled from different disciplines such as business, social work, and nursing shows some similarities and differences among them in the way that service is approached. For example, according to the professor interviewed from the Nursing School, the objective of service in this field is to help a person regain his or her health and to achieve an acceptable level of independence, competence and productivity in society. Both professors from the Social Work school said that the goal of service is to help a person achieve his or her personal goals and integrate into society. One of the professors in the Business School and the manager at Schlotzsky's Deli opined that part of service is enabling people to reach their goals by themselves. Even though these fields of study are diverse, there is a common thread that unifies the idea of service in all of them that could make one think that the value of service means the same everywhere.

Despite the universal characteristics of this concept across fields of study, there are slight, yet important, differences in the application of the term "service." The core of the concept remains, but its application presents variations in each discipline. One example is service in a company like Barnes & Noble versus service in a library. In both cases, service is a way to keep clients or patrons satisfied, and happy, and to help them find what they are seeking. However, for a company like Barnes & Noble, the main purpose is to sell as much as they can so they may increase their profits. In a library, the goal of service is to have patrons satisfied with the products and personalized attention, to make them come back. The more users that visit the library, the easier it is to justify its existence and, by doing so, to be able to achieve its mission and to justify its funding.

Similarly, the Social Work and Business professors agree that one of the goals of service is to build a good relationship with the client. The purpose of this task, from the business point of view, is to survive in a marketplace where clients have multiple alternatives for similar products; service is what makes the difference. In the case of social workers, the purpose of having a good relationship with their clients is to increase communication and confidence, to be able to work together, and to help them reach their personal goals.

In the specific situation of LIS, for students and professionals working in information organizations, this value appears to represent something more practical and concrete than theoretical. Service for them seems to be associated with direct interaction with patrons. For professors however, it seems that service is something more abstract: a theory or an approach. Additionally, there are also different ways to interpret the meaning of service. The literature review shows this problem not only when different authors define service from different perspectives but also when the term “service” does not appear in specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias. This problem with a definition of service suggests a weak development of professional ethics⁸ in LIS because there seems not to be a solid definition of principles and values that frame this discipline.

There are also multiple definitions of this value depending on the different types of libraries: special libraries (SLA, 2004), public libraries (PLA, n. d.), and academic libraries, and school libraries. Furthermore, every organization or library establishes its own values for internal use; see the multiple examples in Appendix 1. When talking about values, but specifically about service, it seems that Library and Information

⁸ “It consist of (a) identifying the duties that are or should be standardized within professional codes of ethics applicable to all members of a profession and (b) grappling with how to apply the duties to particular situations where they conflict or have unclear implications. All professions specify duties: to provide competent care, obtain informed consent, maintain confidentiality, be honest, avoid conflicts of interest, and (collectively with other professionals) provide public access to services” (Martin, 2000, p. 3)

Science professionals live in a Tower of Babel: everyone has his or her own opinion and approach to the topic. There are no limits for the meaning of this value in LIS; some people use a business approach to define it, others use an educational approach, and some participants in this research defined service from a more ethical perspective.

Based on the first principle of logic, which is the principle of contradiction that says “something cannot be both A and not-A at the same time and in the same respect” (Asperson, 1998, p. 74), one could say that a word that has multiple meanings or contradictory approaches does not mean anything. This principle might be applicable to this case because service in LIS has many different interpretations and definitions. At this point, service could mean almost anything in LIS; it appears that what information professionals defend is their personal approach not the discipline’s approach to this value and its application in real situations. If service is one of the more important values of LIS, it is essential to be clear about what service means for this discipline. Strong values can be like anchors for a profession, but without clarity about their meaning and limits, a profession can drift.

Education and training in how to provide service, an important task to consider

- *Service is more than goodwill, it is also knowledge*

When talking about interpersonal relations in service, it is not enough to have the good intention to help others and be friendly, it is also important to learn how to perform in the best way. The Nursing School professor said that service is a combination of good attitude, caring about people, and scientific or technical knowledge. For her, caring about people is not enough; one needs the knowledge to be able to help them effectively. But to only have knowledge without the attitude of caring is not good either. Customer

service managers from Barnes & Noble and Schlotzsky's voiced a similar idea. It is not enough to hire somebody who is good in working with people; these companies train their employees to become service providers according to the standards of service of the company.

It seems that most people from the Insider, El Corazón de Tejas, and the JESSE lists share this point of view. One of the respondents wrote that it is not enough for a person to have a service-oriented attitude; it is necessary to have the knowledge of how to help patrons reach their goals. It is also essential to know how to use tools like databases, indexes, abstracts and the kind of information one can find in encyclopedias, handbooks, and almanacs, for example. Skills like empathy, sympathy, and active listening are also important for the information professional in identifying if a patron is having difficulties articulating his or her information request, responding to patrons' complaints, and in knowing the community in which she or he works. These techniques also help the information professional to help coworkers and patrons. A friendly attitude is important, but it is also essential to address their information needs effectively.

- ***To Educate or not to educate, that is the question***

"When a river makes noise, it is moving stones"⁹ is a Spanish aphorism that means that, when people talk about something directly or indirectly, there is probably a deep reason for it. This aphorism illustrates what seemed to happen in LIS when professors from the top ten universities and the JESSE list said that they think they do a good job educating about service but they are not sure about other professors. These indirect answers are similar to the ones expressed by the participants from the Insider, El Corazón de Tejas, and some others from the JESSE list, who said that they do not think

⁹ "Cuando el río suena, piedras trae."

that information professionals receive an appropriate education to become service providers and to become aware of the importance of service in LIS. For some professionals it was clear that students do not receive an appropriate education on how to provide service. Other professionals seem to know about the lack of courses about service, but they did not accept it openly. The fact that a group of information professionals could not provide clear answers could be interpreted as a way to accept that there is not a formal and adequate level of education about service in LIS.

Professors in the JESSE list and from the top ten universities also used a different terminology when they refer to this topic in their answers. Some of them used terms like “customer service,” “customer orientation,” a “user-centered” and “customer-centered approach,” concepts that have been adopted from other fields in the last decade and that also could have to do with the concept of service but in a slightly different way. The reason for these multiple approaches could also be related to the absence of a uniform definition of service in the Library and Information Science field. So, professors teach or emphasize what they consider service to be. But students might have a different idea of what it is, so they do not think they have received any education about it. One way or another, directly or indirectly, participants recognized that there is a lack of education about this topic in the curriculum, and they seemed open to learning more about it.

- ***Is service something only for librarians to learn?***

That education about service and its application has been related mostly to librarianship but not to information science can be perceived in the responses from the electronic lists, the top ten universities’ professors, and the information about the curricula on the selected university Web sites. The courses where students study topics like empathy, sensitivity, and active listening, are in reference classes according to

responses of the professors of the Top Ten LIS programs, but those topics are not part of any of the core courses. It seems that LIS schools are assuming that only those students who become reference librarians are going to interact with users.

One of the participants in the JESSE electronic list thinks students of information science or more technology-oriented areas should not receive any service education. For her, all students need to be aware of the importance of service, but not all of them need to study the topic in depth. In her opinion, students in those areas are going to have little direct interaction with users in comparison with the ones in reference.

It seems, however, that the technology professions and the technological areas of LIS are changing. The book *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web* by Louis Rosenfeld and Peter Morville (2002) is a good example of this trend. The authors suggest research methodologies like interviews, card sorting, user testing, surveys and focus groups for designing Web sites. This trend implies a closer relationship with users, unlike the past, when software, hardware and Web designers worked only at their desks with a minimum interaction with users. Moreover, service, as defined for this research, does not mean only a face-to-face relationship between patrons and information professionals; service also includes concepts such as accuracy, quality, organization and accessibility, and it is important for all staff members to be aware of the importance of those components for the maximum performance of the library as a whole.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Information professionals today have to remain current about what is going on in the world, their country, and their communities. They also must keep up with hardware and software changes and the trends in information organization, storage, and information retrieval methods. New and fascinating areas have also emerged in LIS in the last decade, including information architecture, usability, and digital libraries. Information professionals and students have many new things to learn and new expectations to meet. Although it is easy to feel overwhelmed, it is important not to forget the principles and values of LIS.

Service has been important to LIS for decades and is still recognized as one of the pillars of the discipline. It seems however that there is not a universal approach to service and the way this value is taught in LIS. One way to resolve this problem is for the American Library Association to define in detail the scope and limits of values for LIS, including service. For example: does service in LIS include only face-to-face interaction? Or does it also involve the organization of the collection in the shelves and the way a database is designed? Professionals, for their part, not only need to be aware of the importance of defining service, but also have the responsibility to make sure the association fulfills this task for the benefit of all.

Another way to resolve this problem with the meaning of service is by creating a course that specifically covers not only the meaning and importance of service for LIS but also explores the limits of the term. But why is it important to have a course instead of incorporating different elements of service in different courses? A course specifically

about service would allow students to theorize about it, to learn techniques to interact with users, to understand service from different points of view according to different departments in a library, and to put service into practice. Service should not be seen only as a theory or only as a practice; service should be learned as a combination of both. As a theory, service is the core of the information professions; through service, libraries exist to improve the quality of people's lives. As a practice, service develops products and services in order to accomplish what the theory states. To include this service as part of an independent course reinforces its importance for LIS, as is the case with courses about users, technology, and research.

Students and professors should discuss questions such as: how can I provide better service from the reference desk, technical processes department, or from the technology department? and such classes should define tools to use in order to provide such service. For students, it would be much easier to understand service as something that needs to be continuously built as a team in a library, something vivid that needs to be part of the everyday activities of information professionals.

Since face-to-face interaction with patrons is one of the important aspects of service, techniques like empathy and active listening that are taught in some reference classes are recommended for all students in the service class. As one of the respondents from the Insider mentioned, because of tight library budgets it is hard to know where a graduate will work. Therefore, it is essential to be well acquainted with all the basic elements of LIS. Moreover, as mentioned in the results section, tendencies like user-centered design and usability require that professionals in technology areas interact more with users; thus the aforementioned techniques would also help to improve their work.

A practice component of service would help students avoid intangibility. The professor might give students a list with possible places they can go work directly or

indirectly with users. In this way students can enrich classroom discussion with examples and questions based in situ experience. To include fieldwork for students in this class is a way to give them a better idea of what real expectations are in the professional world.

Each school should make clear to prospective students, in the printed material and on their Web sites, that service is an essential part of LIS. In most cases, schools enumerate the skills students should have to get into the program. But it is also important to talk about the personal characteristics they should have, or need to develop, in order to succeed as a professional. In the case of service, it would be useful to let students know that good interpersonal skills and caring about people are important elements not only when working with patrons, but also for understanding the mission of the library and for being able to connect with it.

Increasing awareness of the value of service in library staff is another recommendation for addressing the meaning of service. Cross training or staff rotation could accomplish this goal. Natalie Hristov (2004) enumerates in “Super-Librarians: Issues, Trends and Practical Solutions for Cross-Training Catalogers to Provide Reference Services” the benefits she obtained working with these two methods. Professionals gained a better perspective of what was happening in different departments, and they also learned to see the library as a system, not as a group of departments that work independently. Managers in all departments could also help their staff to internalize the importance of service by asking their staff for suggestions about how to improve service. By doing so, staff members could also perceive that service is not only a task for information professionals in one or two departments, but for everyone in the library.

Finally, the use of standards like the ISO 9004-2 or others in libraries would help to universalize the way service is conceived and provided among libraries. A standard,

according to *Standards, Conformity Assessment, and Trade Into the 21st Century*, “is a set of characteristics or quantities that describes features of a product, process, service, interface, or material” (Standards, 1995, p. 9). A standard of service would benefit the library staff because they would know what colleagues expect from them in their job performance. To have a standard does not mean that information professionals must necessarily follow a strict set of rules. Standards can be used as a guide to develop better services and to provide better service to patrons while always respecting and recognizing local norms. Patrons, as a result, will perceive the library as a more integrated organization with clear goals and values.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As mentioned at the beginning of this work, this is an exploratory study that compiles information about the extent to which service exists in LIS. However, the sizes of the samples were small and may not fully represent the magnitude of the problem. Increasing the sample size and sending questions to more than one electronic list with similar characteristics would enrich the data.

In the case of the information compiled from the top ten universities for this study a larger sample and a more controlled way of getting information would be of great benefit if doing a similar study. Some of the people contacted did not answer the questions or instead recommended gathering the information from a Web site. It would be helpful to develop a questionnaire asking for more detailed information about the methodology and literature used to teach about service in their courses. The questionnaire could guide face-to-face interviews with faculty members of these universities. It would also be useful for the research to include all LIS faculty members to compare different

approaches to the same topic within the school and be able to determine tendencies based on each professor's background and work experience.

In addition, I recommend a literature review of service in other fields. Learning more about service not only from what professionals in other areas say but also by reading about their theoretical approaches and applications would enrich the concept of service and its application for LIS. Later, it would be useful to evaluate the pros and cons of these different approaches to the topic and evaluate new ideas from that literature that could enrich and improve the idea of service or its application for LIS.

This research focused on the value of service and its application to LIS. It seems that this value has been implicit rather than explicit in LIS; that it has been transmitted generation after generation without being formally included in students' curricula. To study service in LIS in depth might help determine if this value is still useful and meaningful today or if it is necessary to redefine it for the 21st century. Information professionals need to define clearly the professional values and principles of LIS. In this way information professionals will better respond to the rapid changes occurring in the profession without forgetting the principal reason libraries exist. For this reason the inclusion of topics such as service in LIS curricula is essential to ensure the continued high performance of information professionals, helping them to prepare for the future standing on solid ground rooted in a foundation of service to individuals, groups and society.

CHAPTER VI

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

1. Library of University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire
<http://www.uwec.edu/library/about/mission.htm>
2. Auburn University Libraries
<http://www.lib.auburn.edu/dean/docs/values.html>
3. Library of University of Arkansas Medical Sciences
<http://www.library.uams.edu/aboutlib/mission.htm>
4. University of Kentucky Libraries
<http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/lcvision.html>
5. National Agricultural Library
http://www.nal.usda.gov/general_info/nal_mv.html
6. Tompkins County Public Library
<http://www.tcpl.org/values.html>
7. North Carolina State University Library
<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/administration/vision/values.html>
8. Minneapolis Public Library
<http://www.mplib.org/mission.asp>
9. Harford County Public Library
<http://www.harf.lib.md.us/services/aboutus/mission.html>
10. George Washington University Libraries
<http://www.gwu.edu/gelman/library/publications/vision.html>
11. Temple University Libraries
<http://www.library.temple.edu/ORGANZTN/mission.htm>

12. Princeton University Library
<http://libweb5.princeton.edu/hr/forms/PULAPerfApp/corevalues.html>

13. Indiana State University Core Values
<http://library.indstate.edu/level1.dir/library.dir/values.html>

14. New York University Libraries
<http://library.indstate.edu/level1.dir/library.dir/values.html>

15. Monroe County Public Library, Indiana
http://www.monroe.lib.in.us/general_info/mission_statement.html
<http://odin.indstate.edu/level1.dir/stratplan.dir/is.pdf>

APPENDIX 2

Descriptors	Number of publications	Percentage (%)
Service Quality	84	34.43
Customer Service	63	25.82
Self-Service	35	14.34
Universal Service Concept	16	6.56
Application Service Providers	10	4.10
Service Level Agreements	10	4.10
Internet Service Providers	5	2.05
Civil Service	4	1.64
Public Service Broadcasting	2	0.82
Service Learning	2	0.82
Service Industries	2	0.82
Service Management Systems	2	0.82
Service Denial	2	0.82
Public Service	1	0.41
Ontology Service	1	0.41
Service Provision	1	0.41
Service (ethics)	1	0.41
Service Control Points	1	0.41
Service Industries	1	0.41
Service Infrastructure	1	0.41
TOTAL	244	100

APPENDIX 3

Faculty members or administrators for each one of the U.S. top ten schools in Library and Information Science

The definition of service that is being used for this research is:

Service is having patrons' needs always present while performing every task in every department in the library. It is assisting patrons to resolve their information needs with a friendly attitude. Service is the sum of being helpful, friendly and respectful of patrons' needs. It is a positive way of thinking and perceiving patrons. Service is a conviction that patrons' satisfaction about services and products is the reason for the library's existence.

1. Are there any courses in the program about how to serve users in a better way?
2. If not, why?
3. If yes, which ones? Are they required courses?

APPENDIX 4

Interview questions for faculty members of the fields of nursing, social work, and business at UT Austin

1. How do you define service in your own words?
2. How would you define service from the (business, social work, nursing) perspective?
3. When you were a student, did you receive any course specifically about service or a course that developed this topic at some point? If not, how did you develop the capacity to provide service?
4. Do you consider that service is important in your field of study? Why?
5. Is this value currently taught to the students in this field in a course or by using another methodology?

If yes, do they learn specific techniques to better serve users, clients, or patients?

APPENDIX 5

Questionnaire for the JESSE list members

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Diana Miranda-Murillo, Master in Information Student at the University of Texas at Austin. The main purposes of this study are to determine the importance of teaching service as a value within current LIS curriculum, and to develop recommendations on improving the lines of communication between practitioners and users.

If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to answer three open questions that are posted below. Please, send your answers to the list, but if it that makes you feel uncomfortable, you can send them off-list. The questionnaire should take 15 minutes to answer.

Your name will not appear on any form or in the final report. No data will be personally identified with you. Participation is completely voluntary, and there are no risks beyond the inconvenience of time. The University of Texas at Austin Office of Research Support and Compliance has approved the distribution of this questionnaire. :

Diana Miranda-Murillo
School of Information
University of Texas at Austin
diana@correo.co.cr

Questions

1. Do you consider that a service-orientation is part of a person's natural disposition or can be taught to all professionals?
2. Do you think librarians are generally well educated during their degree program to be service-oriented?
3. The curriculum in the field of Library and Information Science is broad. Do you consider it important to train all professionals as service providers or only those who are going to be working with library patrons face-to-face? Why?

APPENDIX 6

Interview questions for bookstore and fast food Company

1. How do you define service in your own words?
2. How would you define service from the perspective of this company?
3. Is all the staff trained in customer service or just only the ones who are dealing with customers?
4. Is this company using any ISO standard for service?
5. Do you consider that service could be something that some people just know naturally? If yes, would you expend less time training a person that is helpful by nature than another one that is not?

Appendix 7

Table 1

How is service taught in the top ten universities in library and information science?

University	Is the value of service taught as part of the curriculum?	Is this taught to all students in the program?	How is this value taught in courses?
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:	Yes. It is included in the statement of purpose.	It is present in four required courses. The basic course of reference, the basic course of technical services, and two required courses.	The reference class emphasizes the RUSA Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Services Professionals (2004) No other methodologies were mentioned in the case of the other courses.
University of Michigan at Ann Arbor:	Did not say specifically. Person contacted suggested to review web site.		
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:	Yes.	The person contacted at this university said, "we believe that information and library science is about the intersection of people, information/content, and technology." According to this person, the value of service is taught in all courses at all levels, even in the strong information technology courses they start with the question: "information technology or systems for whom?"	No specific methodology was mentioned.

Syracuse University	Yes.	Service is part of two introductory courses required to all students and it is also part of one of the reference courses.	In the introductory classes, service is presented to students as the “backbone” of the profession” but the contacted person did not mention any specific technique. In the reference class techniques like empathy, sympathy and active listening are taught.
University of Pittsburgh at Main Campus:	Did not answer	Did not answer	Did not answer
Indiana University at Bloomington:	Did not say specifically. Contact suggested to review web site.	No specific courses were mentioned	No specific methodology or topics were mentioned
Rutgers University at New Brunswick	Yes.	According to the contact, it is taught as part of each class but this person was not specific about any courses and suggested to review web site.	No specific methodology was mentioned
University of Wisconsin at Madison:	Yes.	It is taught principally in one of the introductory courses required for all students, one of the cataloguing classes and one of the reference classes.	No specific methodology was mentioned for the introductory class. In the cataloguing class, students answer the question: how the does the way the information is catalogued affect patrons? In the reference class service is taught by techniques like empathy and open-ended questioning for example.
Drexel University (PA.):	Did not answer	Did not answer	Did not answer

CHAPTER VII

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Vita

Diana Miranda-Murillo was born in San José, Costa Rica, on April 3, 1973, the daughter of María de los Angeles Murillo Hernández and Minor Miranda Rivera. In 1992, she began her studies at the University of Costa Rica where she obtained her first bachelors degree in Library Science with concentration in Information Sciences in 1998, and a second degree with concentration in Educational Libraries in 2000. She has been working in the field since 1993. Miranda-Murillo has worked in public, academic, school, and special libraries; the variety of tasks and experiences has given her a rich perspective on the field. In May 2002, she entered at the Information School at the University of Texas at Austin.

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